

# **Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 23, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis, Part 3**

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 23, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis, Part 3.

So, we are at D, lecture number 16, Neo-Orthodoxy and the Social Crisis, and we are at D, Christ and Culture.

Okay, just a reminder here about where we are. Neo-Orthodoxy, this European movement that came over into America, championed by people like the Niebuhr brothers, but Neo-Orthodoxy was a movement that looked at the broad middle of American life and felt that it was not being challenged. It saw on the left was a kind of classical Protestant liberalism, which had kind of become bankrupt.

You remember the quotation we gave from H. Richard Niebuhr from the Kingdom of God in America, but on the right was kind of an American fundamentalism, which was perceived, we'll see if that perception was right or not, but nevertheless, was perceived as kind of an anti-intellectual, kind of an emotional movement, and the people in the middle, the broad middle of Protestants, didn't have anything to hang on to, and Neo-Orthodoxy appeals to them, because it's a very strong, biblically-based movement, seeing the Bible mainly through the eyes of the Reformation, through the eyes of Calvin primarily, but also it was a very intellectual movement. It was a movement that could really grapple with philosophy and the arts and culture and the modern world and all the problems that modernity brought, politics, social construction, and so forth, so it was a very, very, very intellectual but powerfully intellectual movement, and so it comes on the scene and plays an important role in American Christianity, especially through the Niebuhrs, as we mentioned. Okay, one of the most important books is Christ and Culture.

Some of you have read at least parts of Christ and Culture in another course, or a couple have read parts of Christ and Culture in another course. We gave an introduction the other day, just a reminder about the book and the context of the book and so forth, and when H. Richard Niebuhr talks about Christ, the incarnate Christ. He's talking about God in the flesh, but he's talking about God in the flesh as the Lord who brought a kingdom reality to this world and is the Lord of history, so there are a lot of dimensions to this God in the flesh.

You can mine the biblical narrative very deeply to find out everything about Christ that he means, and then by culture, what he means by culture is what we place upon

the natural world to form social reality, and that could be politics, it could be the arts, it could be science, it could be architecture, helps to form and shape culture, so lots of things, you know, can shape culture, no doubt. Ethics help to shape culture. One thing we mentioned, I think, right at the conclusion the other day was language.

Language is culture, as one of my professors was fond of saying so many times, but if you get the language of a people, you can get their culture because language helps to shape that cultural reality, so language is a really important shaper of culture. So, in Christ and culture, we mentioned that he gives five models. We're going to take three of them, kind of one on one side, one on the other side, and three in the middle, but I've moved into kind of taking those three and moving them into one, so I think that's about where we left off.

Let's journey on here. Number two in your outline is an opposition between Christ and culture, the opposition between Christ and culture. Okay, now, who holds this position of opposition between Christ and culture? Well, people who want to affirm the sole authority of Christ in their individual lives, in their corporate lives, and in their community lives.

They want to affirm Christ has the sole and only authority. There is no other authority to which we need to kind of bend the knee, so forth. So, therefore, culture has no claims to our loyalty.

People who hold to this position, opposing Christ and culture, say culture has no claims to our loyalty. Only Christ has the claim to our loyalty, and so the Christianity that this Christ shapes is not a cultural Christianity, but the Christianity that this Christ shapes is a new order. It's a new kingdom.

It is a new world, and our only loyalty is to that new order, to that new kingdom, and to that new world. We have no loyalty to the culture in which we happen to find ourselves. Now, people who believe in the opposition between Christ and culture open the Bible, and when they open the Bible, what they find in the Bible is a radical call to come and be apart from the world.

They read the Bible, Genesis to Revelation, and they especially read the words of Jesus, and they feel this is a radical call to leave the world, to leave a fallen world, and to follow him, and follow him only. So, the word radical is pretty important here, getting to the root of things. This call of Christ to not be a part of the world, God bless you, and not be a part of the new kingdom is really a radical call, and any true disciple is going to follow that call.

Any true disciple is going to heed that call. So now, sometimes opposition between Christ and culture, sometimes, but not always, but sometimes mixed into this is a very dynamic kind of eschatology, and sometimes in the mixture is a belief that we

are living in the end times, that the end of the world is kind of upon us, and in that end times in which we live, then all cultural realities are going to be done away with anyways, and the only thing that's going to be left is a new heaven and a new earth. So sometimes, there's a very strong eschatological strain in the opposition between Christ and the people of the culture.

So, it's no wonder that our ultimate allegiance isn't due to the culture but because the culture is passing. Any culture is passing, and any culture will ultimately stand under the judgment of God in this eschatological dimension. Now, not all opposition people are that eschatologically minded, but some of them who feel that they are representing what was true in the New Testament, that the New Testament believers really believed in the imminent second coming of Jesus and conducted their lives in that kind of radical way.

Well, if we're living in that kind of eschatological reality, we also ought to be conducting our lives in the way that the primitive church conducted their lives, having no allegiance to any culture, only allegiance to Christ and his kingdom. Now, for some, not all, but for some of these people, the institutions that human beings establish are evil and really kind of perverse. Therefore, there are some things that are to be shunned, some things in the broader culture that you try not to have anything to do with.

So let me just mention a few of those, that reality kind of, but for example, political life, the political and social life of the culture is to be shunned. You don't have anything to do with that political or social life. So, politics don't matter.

Politics are kind of out. So that's one kind of example. Military life is shunned.

Many, sometimes, people who are in opposition between Christ and culture are pacifists, and they will not participate in any military. This is the military establishment is a fallen and evil establishment set up by an evil culture. So they will not have anything to do with it; they will kind of shun that military life.

Anything to do with philosophy is seen as a kind of human construction of thinking that's done for. I mean, that is shunned. Your main allegiance is to the Bible and to the teachings of Jesus and not to Aristotle or Aquinas or something like that.

Often, anything to do with the arts is shunned because the artistic world is an expression of what? It's an expression of a fallen culture. And so, you don't have anything to do with the artistic world. And that is kind of out.

So, there is opposition between Christ and culture. Now, Niebuhr gives some examples of people who hold this. I'm going to give a couple of examples.

One that he gives and one that he mentions, but it's a really important example for us and for our course. So, I'll give that too. Okay.

One example he obviously talks a lot about is monasticism. Monasticism is a movement that, at times historically, was an opposition to the Christ and culture movement. Monasticism started with just individual monks, and then it moved into a community movement in the second and third centuries.

But it got away with as much as possible with culture, and the total allegiance was only to Christ. The early monks, of course, lived alone in the cave, and they sat in the cave and contemplated all of their lives. They had nothing to do with culture at all.

They were barely kept alive by their disciples, who kept food. Once in a while, you get a Simeon Stylites. Have you talked about Simeon Stylites in your course? Simeon Stylites was one of the early Egyptian monks.

I think he was in Egypt or Syria. There was a pole, and he climbed up to the top. For the rest of his life, he lived up on top of that pole in a little place where he lived. All the nourishment and everything was done by the disciples.

But he was a contemplative monk, and he was totally away from culture at all. A lot of the individual monks and then a lot of the early communities were opposed to Christ and culture. Long ago in the course, I mentioned my visit to the Trappist Monastery.

Remember we were talking about Bardstown, Kentucky, and how important that was to Roman Catholicism. That Trappist Monastery visit was, in a sense, an opposition between Christ and culture experience because the Trappist monks were sworn to poverty, and the abbot of the monastery gave some of them permission to talk to us so some of them could commune with us. But they were sworn to poverty, and each one lived in just one cell with one bed, one chair, and one little shelf that would hold all their worldly belongings.

Everything they owned was there, and then they had their cloaks on, and then the other one was being washed. So that's all they had, sworn to poverty. Sworn to chastity, it was a contemplative order.

So, once they made their final vows they never saw a woman again in their life. So that meant mother and sister. Poverty, chastity, obedience, they were sworn to obedience to the abbot of the monastery, absolute obedience, and they are a silent order.

So, they're a contemplative order. So, once they take their final vows, they take a vow of silence for their lives. Now, technically, you could say with the Trappists that silence was not demanded, but it was important to the order.

So, whether you would call it a fourth vow or not, I'm not sure. But they lived silent lives, and they had seven watches a day, during which they sang the great Gregorian chants so they didn't lose their vocal cords. But they did live. Other than that, their lives were silent.

And in silence, they contemplated God all day long as they went about their business and so forth. We thought, by the way, we thought in that experience when we were going, we didn't know anything about this, but we thought we'd find a few, and it it's a very, what they built was a very gothic medieval looking monastery. I mean, it looked like you're being transported back into France or Germany in the medieval world.

We thought we'd see quite a few kind of doddering old men, and there weren't; there were some, but a lot of them were young men who had taken final vows. So a lot of them were men, only 21, 22, and 23 years old. They had taken their final vows already.

They have a three-year novitiate, and they were there for their lives. They were in that order for the rest of their lives. They are buried right there on the ground.

So, he saw the monastic order as an example of opposition between Christ and culture. So that's one example. Now the other example I'm going to use that he didn't, he might've mentioned it, but I'm going to use American fundamentalism.

Now, that's what we're coming across in our next lecture. But American fundamentalism, you can get among some American fundamentalists, as we'll see when we study the history of fundamentalism, you can get an opposition between Christ and culture mentality where the culture is totally fallen, and therefore, you should have nothing to do with it or at least as little to do with it as is possible. It's just your church life.

You're formed in a community of a church life community. And so the American fundamentalist movement, some of it can be a movement in opposition between Christ and culture. If you were reared in American fundamentalism of any kind, you would know that there were pretty much a lot of rules and regulations, a lot of do's and don'ts in terms of your rearing, because that they was trying to keep you away from that fallen culture, that you want no allegiance with that culture.

So, okay. So those are two examples. Now, what he does with, I mean, is two examples of opposition between Christ and culture.

Okay. What he does now with each of these is he sees it as a necessary position but an inadequate position. So that's what he does with opposition between Christ and culture.

So, there are two sides to the coin. Niebuhr says this is a necessary position. Now, why is it a necessary position? It's a necessary position because it reminds Christians of ultimate loyalties.

What is your ultimate loyalty in life? What is your absolute loyalty in life? It is not to any culture. It is to Christ and Christ alone. It is to Jesus as Lord and to his kingdom.

That's your absolute total loyalty. He says this is a necessary position because it reminds us of absolute loyalty. Also, he says it's a necessary position because he reminds us that culture often makes compromises contrary to the teachings of Jesus.

And some of the compromises it makes can be pretty sickening compromises that are so contrary to kingdom values and kingdom life. And, sometimes, the world in which we live is, is kind of a sickening world in a sense where there's an inordinate love of life or even an inordinate fear of death. But it can make compromises that would devalue Christians if they yielded to those compromises.

So, he calls this a necessary position. But then he says it's an adequate, it's an inadequate position. It's necessary.

We have to have this. We're glad there are people like this, but it's an inadequate position. Okay.

Now, why is it an inadequate position? We can't, we can't just go with this position. It's inadequate because human beings are cultural beings. We are cultural by the very fact that we live in communities, and we are creatures of that culture.

And what we don't, perhaps what we don't, don't realize is that Jesus is Lord over all, all the world, including over all the cultures. So, what happens is that people who hold the opposite view of Christ and culture don't realize that they're creating their own culture. So, they are creating a culture.

So, you can't. We are cultural beings by very, by very, by the very fact that we are in communities. And so, we create our own cultures. And the question is, do we have a loyalty to those cultures or not? And we do spend a lot of time trying to conserve the cultures that we create.

So, everybody is a cultural being. Now, let's take monasticism for just a moment. The monasticism that we saw in the early church, in the second century and third

centuries, evolved so that by the time you get to the medieval world, what is the relationship of monasticism to the broader culture in the medieval world? What is that relationship? It is controlling that broader culture.

The monasticism was a place of art. Monasticism was a place of architecture. Monasticism was a place of language.

Monasticism was a place of learning. Monasticism is largely what controlled Western culture in the medieval world. So, the very culture that it might've despised early on found that it was the controlling factor of that culture.

And of course, then you'd have reactions against that, like the Franciscans saying, no, we've gone too far. Let's push back and so forth. So, fundamentalism certainly creates its own culture as well.

So, I was talking with a rabbi who was here; it was last semester, and I think he was last semester. I had a chance to be at dinner with him, with Marv and others. But we were talking about Hasidic Jews and their culture.

And he is a Jew, as an American Jew, probably in the reformed tradition. He looks at the Hasidic Jews, very fundamentalist, very careful in their dress and community life and everything. And as a Jew, he looks at the Hasidic Jews as rather strange, the ultra-Orthodox Jews, a rather strange group to him as an American Jew, as an American Reform Jew.

But he said to me, he said, however, I have to recognize that if Judaism is alive five or 600 years from now, it's going to be thanks to those people. Those people have kept Judaism and the essence of Judaism alive. American Jews, Reformed Jews, and so forth, they've become very Americanized, very much part of the culture, and so forth.

So, it's necessary, but it is inadequate, no doubt about that. Okay, so those are two oppositions between Christ and culture. Number three is the opposite.

It's a synthesis of Christ and culture, number three. It's on page 16 of your outline. A synthesis of Christ and culture.

Okay, so in this synthesis of Christ and culture, there is no tension between Christ and the world. There is absolutely no tension between Christ and the world. These people are equally at home in Christ and in the culture.

They see no tension with this at all. So, the gospel and social laws, gospel laws and social laws are beautifully in harmony with each other. Divine grace and human effort are beautifully in harmony with each other.

There's a harmony between God's grace and our human effort. The ethics of salvation and the ethics of progress. Ethics of salvation and ethics of progress are beautifully in harmony with each other.

There's no tension between those kinds of things. They don't see any gap between them at all. Now, what they tend to do, and we've already seen this with liberal Protestantism, what they tend to do is see Jesus and his teachings as a guide for this view.

Jesus and his teachings are a guide to this liberalized view that he's a good moral teacher, he's a good ethical person, and he's a moral man to be modeled after. So Jesus is the perfect person at home in the culture, at home in the world, but at home with God. And he is the perfect model for that kind of being at home.

Okay, the goal, as far as they're concerned, the goal of culture is a shalom. It's a peaceful, cooperative human existence. That is the goal of culture.

As far as they're concerned, all cultures should be moving toward that goal. Now, this is a culture. However, with this view of culture, this culture can be socially constructed. We can construct this culture, and we human beings can construct this culture of shalom.

We can do this. We have the wherewithal to do it; we have the freedom to do it, and we have the ethical mandates to do it. Therefore, we don't need to talk about the kingdom of God.

We don't need the kingdom of God's language to help us construct a culture with which God is pleased. We are able to do this. There's no doubt about this.

Therefore, because we have the ability to do this, all cultures and religions are welcome to join this conversation. This is a multi-cut, second group, a synthesis of Christ and culture. This is a multicultural effort, and it's a multi-religious effort.

So, there is no kind of judgment based on any culture. There's no judgment upon any religion, and there's a beautiful synthesis, there's a beautiful harmony here of the two. So that is, we call this a synthesis of Christ and culture.

Okay, now, there are two examples of this, and we've seen both examples in our course. But the two examples of this, the first would be deism and uses the example of deism. So first, we know enough about deism now.

So the first would be the deism of the 18th century, Thomas Jefferson. The ideals we've just talked about were certainly ideals of Thomas Jefferson. And the second



would be what we call classical liberal Protestantism, Protestantism of the 19th century, 20th century into the 21st century, classical liberal Protestantism.

As I mentioned earlier on in the course, I used to take students when we were in New York City, I used to take students to the Judson Memorial Church. And Hunter, duck when you go by that camera, will you? So that's great, all right, good, all right. We used to take people to the Judson Memorial Church, which was a very interesting example of what we're talking about.

And we mentioned one Sunday, the preacher was preaching on a Walt Disney religion, so the hymns of that Sunday were like Mickey Mouse and Davy Crockett, and all the Walt Disney songs were hymns for the day. The communion was Coca-Cola and potato chips. And one day, another Sunday, he was preaching on health.

And so, the call to worship, you didn't know what the call to worship was going to be. You kind of sat around wondering what it's called. Call to worship was a tumbling team. They brought out their mats and put them in the middle of the church, and they were tumbling around and everything.

And that was the call to worship, the tumbling team doing their thing for worship. So, all cultures and all expressions of culture are equally valid, and that's very interesting. One thing I will say about the church is you never know what you're going to get.

And that's boy, that gets you going to that church with great anticipation. You always wonder what is going to happen today. Who knows? It was a very interesting experience. So those two examples.

Okay. What does he say about this other example, then? What he says about this other example is that this is a necessary position. He says it's a necessary position.

Okay. And why is it a necessary position? It's a necessary position because you cannot associate Christ with any culture. You can't lock Christ into any culture.

He is the creator of all humanity, and therefore, it's human beings who create culture, so therefore, you can't associate him with any culture. If you were going to associate him with any culture, you would associate him, of course, with a Middle Eastern culture as Jesus, not as Christ because Christ always was, Christ always will be, but as Jesus came into this world in a particular culture, no doubt about that. So, it is a necessary position.

Niebuhr also says it's a necessary position because people who hold this position because they're comfortable in their culture they're able to speak to the cultural despisers of Christianity. They are able to. It's like Schleiermacher. They're able to

address the cultural despisers of Christianity and show them where they have gone wrong. So, they are called to minister to the cultural elite in a sense because they feel at home in the culture.

They can minister to people who are critical of Christ and Christianity in that culture because they're working on their level. So, he says it's a necessary position. We need people like Schleiermacher who can minister to the cultural elites in life.

But he also says it's an inadequate position. And he says it's an inadequate position because it's, I'm sorry, it's an inadequate position because it fails to see how radical the call of the gospel is. The call of the gospel does not allow for two allegiances: Christ and culture and synthesis.

The call of the gospel never allows for that. Why? Because cultures are inherently sinful. And here you can hear the New York, Barth coming through, and Niebuhr coming through.

Cultures are inherently sinful because they are created by sinful people. So, all cultures share that kind of sin. And the problem is that people in that culture don't recognize that.

And they tend to associate their culture with the will of God. And they don't recognize the sinfulness of what has constructed that culture. So, it's a necessary position, but it's an inadequate position because it does not recognize sin or evil in the world.

And if you're going to say all cultures are equally worthy, all cultures, there's a wonderful synthesis here. If you're going to say that, then what judgment are you going to bring upon Nazis? What judgment are you going to bring upon the Nazi culture, which eliminated and horribly slaughtered 11 million people? Are you going to have any judgment on that culture? If all cultures are equally worthy, if all cultures, if there's a synthesis of Christ with all cultures, then are you going to stand back and say we shouldn't bring judgment upon any culture at all? So anyway, it's an inadequate position as far as he's concerned. Okay, number three, or it's number four actually in your outline, but number four is Christ and culture intention.

Christ and cultural intention represent the middle ground, the three middle models that he has. What I've done is I've taken those middle models and then put them all together here. So, okay, now this is, as far as Niebuhr is concerned, the middle way, but the difficult way.

The middle model, now we're just going to talk about it as though it's one model, Christ and culture intention. The middle model is the hard model. It's the hard way.

And it's the hard way because you've got to reconcile Christ and culture in some way. You've got to understand the tensions between Christ and culture, and you've got to reconcile Christ and culture in some way. So now these people remind us that Jesus Christ is the Lord of all, which means he's the Lord of all that happens in this life, not the least of which is cultural expression.

Because of the natural world upon which we form culture, that natural world was created by Christ at the time of creation. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were created. And therefore, the natural world upon which we shape culture, that natural world is inherently good.

It is not inherently evil. And it's been declared good by God himself. So that natural world.

Now, on the other hand, we recognize that when we impose and shape a culture, that culture is often evil. And we recognize that. But in spite of all of that, and here you hear this at Gordon College too, but in spite of all of that, all truth is God's truth.

So, in spite of the fact that there is evil in the creation of culture, in spite of that, all truth is God's truth. In other words, wherever you find truth, that comes from God. Wherever you see the truth.

So, if there's scientific truth, where does that come from? It comes from God. If there's philosophical truth, it comes from God. If there's mathematical truth, that's God who gave us that.

Religious truth comes from God. So, all truth is God's truth. So therefore, if that statement is true, then Christians want to be obedient in serving the culture where they find truth.

And as Niebuhr says, obedience is not rendered in the abstract. Obedience is rendered in everyday life, in serving the world where God has placed us, and in doing it faithfully wherever we find truth. And so, for him, this is kind of a triumph of grace over sin in a sense.

As far as he's concerned, as he's kind of spelling this out, because all truth is God's truth, and because all truth is God's truth, wherever you find truth, it's from God. Scientific truth, mathematical truth, philosophical truth, artistic truth. If you can claim that to be true, you then see that God is the author of that.

Then he says the Christian call is not a call in the abstract. We are called Christians are called to work in the culture in which God has placed us. And he's placed us in different cultures.

But God has placed us to work in the culture, to find where there is truth in that culture, and to embrace that truth. And then to speak the truth of the gospel to that truth, too. So, there is a job to do.

So, what he says is obedience is not rendered in the abstract. When Christ calls us to obey, that's not an abstract principle. That's a calling to obedience in the everyday world.

So, does that help? That's what he's calling us to. We're going to use two examples here. One example is St. Thomas.

So, St. Thomas Aquinas finds a lot of help with St. Thomas. Because St. Thomas was able to combine theology and philosophy. St. Thomas was able to see the construction of reality as we look theologically and philosophically.

So, St. Thomas was able to keep this kind of intention. And as far as St. Thomas was concerned, our ability to reason in this world is a product of it; it's a gift from God. So, we use that reason in every area of culture that Christians live in and work in.

It's a gift from God. And it works itself out politically, or it works itself out socially. It works itself out artistically.

It works itself out in many, many ways as people minister to their culture. So, culture is the work of God-given reason in God-given nature. So, St. Thomas, for him, this was very, very important.

When you look at a lot of the Catholic universities in America, such as Boston College or Notre Dame, what is their philosophy of education? How do they express their philosophy of education? Well, they express it often in this kind of language. This is the language that they use. God has given us reason to think through in every area that we are teaching in this institution.

That's the Catholic way of reasoning, thinking about why God has placed us here and how his grace is evident in everything that we study, and so forth. So, a second good example, and I have to confess that I forget if he used this example, but a second good example is the letter to Diognetus. This is the second century.

I've got the spelling up here if you need it. But the letter to Diognetus, in the second century, really beautifully exemplifies the tension that we're living in. So, I am going to take just a minute to read a paragraph from the letter to Diognetus.

Have any of you read that letter for any course by any chance? It's a great letter. So, if you want to get this kind of sense, I'm going to take a minute to read just a

paragraph here. And this exemplifies what we're talking about, the middle ground here.

Christians are not differentiated from other people by country, language, or customs. You see, they do not live in cities of their own, speak some strange dialect, or have some peculiar lifestyle. This teaching of theirs has not been contrived by the invention and speculation of inquisitive men, nor are they propagating mere human teaching as some people do.

They live in both Greek and foreign cities, wherever chance has put them. They follow local customs in clothing, food, and other aspects of life. But at the same time, they demonstrate to us the wonderful and certainly unusual form of their own citizenship.

They live in their own native lands but as aliens. As citizens, they share all things with others, but like aliens, they suffer all things. Every foreign country is to them as their native country, and every native land is a foreign country.

They marry and have children just like everybody else, but they do not kill unwanted babies. They offer a shared table but not a shared bed. They are at present in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh.

They are passing their days on earth but are citizens of heaven. They obey the appointed laws and go beyond the laws in their own lives. They love everyone but are persecuted by all.

They are unknown and condemned. They are put to death and gain life. They are poor, yet they make many rich.

They are short of everything and yet have plenty of all things. They are dishonored and yet gain glory through dishonor. Their names are blackened, yet they are cleared.

They are mocked and blessed in return. They are treated outrageously and behave respectfully to others. When they do good, they are punished as evildoers.

When punished, they rejoice as if being given new life. They are attacked by Jews as aliens and are persecuted by Greeks, yet those who hate them cannot give any reason for their hostility. To put it simply, the soul is to the body, as Christians are to the world.

The soul is spread throughout all parts of the body, and Christians spread it through all the cities of the world. The soul is in the body, but it is not of the body. Christians are in the world, but not of the world.

So, the letter to Diognetus. Google it sometime. Read the whole letter.

Not right now, bless your hearts, but Google it sometime and read the whole letter to Diognetus. It is a beautiful illustration of this kind of middle ground. Okay.

Now, what does Niebuhr do with this middle ground? Niebuhr places his allegiance right here. So, he does not call this an inadequate but a necessary position. As far as Niebuhr is concerned, you will notice that he does not give a criticism of this middle ground because Niebuhr really thinks that we live life in tension.

We are citizens of heaven. We are citizens of Earth. He feels Christians should not run to the easy place of the monastery, but on the other hand, they should not take refuge in Protestant liberalism, which is basically bankrupt.

So, he is going to be in this middle ground. We live in tension between Christ and culture. So, for Niebuhr, the middle ground says our allegiance is to both.

It is both to Christ and it is to the culture in which we find ourselves working by God's grace. So, he is not going to bring the kind of criticism in the middle ground that he does to the others. Okay.

Christ and culture. You could do a lot worse than read this book this summer. Bless your hearts.

So, put it on your reading list. It is great. But just for a couple of minutes, do we have any questions about the opposition, the synthesis, and the tension? Any questions? Yeah.

I put them all into here, and they are kind of the same. I would have to look and just kind of remind myself. Do you mean the exact title of them? I would have to look at that just to be sure.

I kind of glue them all together here, and I would have to check that out. But when you read the book, it is not hard to see where Niebuhr's own allegiance is. Although he is very fair really generally about the book, you can see where he is coming down here.

Something else about Christ and culture. Okay. Just a word about where we're going in life.

On Wednesday, I've allowed myself three or four days to talk about fundamentalism and evangelicalism because it's a really broad topic, and we need some time for that. So we'll start that on Wednesday. Okay.

Bless your hearts.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 23, Neo-Orthodoxy and Social Crisis, Part 3.